

**IN THE CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. (original) An intervertebral spacer device, comprising:

a first baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the inwardly facing surface having a central post extending therefrom, the post having a longitudinal axis and a head end that is inwardly directed toward the second baseplate;

a second baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the second baseplate's inwardly facing surface having a curvate pocket formed by a central portion of the second baseplate's inwardly facing surface concaving outwardly to define a semispherical contour;

a convex structure having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the convex structure further having a central bore extending from the convex structure's inwardly facing surface to the convex structure's outwardly facing surface, the convex structure's central bore having an opening on the convex structure's outwardly facing surface that is surrounded by a curvate taper defining a semispherical contour; and

a ball defining a spherical contour, the ball having a central bore; wherein

the ball is seatable in the curvate pocket; and wherein the convex structure's outwardly facing surface is securable to the second baseplate, the securing of the convex structure to the second baseplate establishing a curvate socket formed by the second baseplate's curvate pocket and the convex structure's curvate taper, the curvate socket defining a spherical contour; and wherein the ball is thereby capturable in the curvate socket, with the curvate socket's spherical contour

accommodating the ball's spherical contour for rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket about a central portion of the ball; and wherein

the post is disposable through the convex structure's central bore and the post's head end is securable to the ball's central bore, such that the post is accommodated for rotation in the convex structure's central bore about the post's longitudinal axis as the ball rotates in the curvate socket, and such that the post is accommodated for angulation in the convex structure's central bore about the ball's central portion as the ball angulates in the curvate socket; and wherein

the second baseplate includes a first part having the inwardly facing surface having the curvate pocket of the second baseplate, and a second part having the outwardly facing surface of the second baseplate; and further comprising a spring member disposed between the first part and the second part such that a compressive load applied to the outwardly facing surfaces of the baseplates is borne by the spring member.

2. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein each of the inwardly facing surface of the first baseplate and the inwardly facing surface of the convex structure has a respective perimeter region, and the perimeter regions have corresponding contours that reduce surface wearing during rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket.

3. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein the second part of the second baseplate travels toward the first part of the second baseplate as the spring member compresses under the compressive load.

4. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein the spring member is ring-shaped.

5. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein the convex structure's central bore is tapered to a larger diameter toward the convex structure's inwardly facing surface, and the post is accommodated, by the convex structure's central bore being tapered, for angulation in the convex structure's central bore about the ball's central portion as the ball angulates in the socket.

6. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein at least one of the curvate pocket and the curvate taper has a hemispherical contour.

7. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein at least one of the baseplates has an osteoinductive vertebral body contact surface on its outwardly facing surface.

8. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 1, wherein the post's head end is compression lockable into the ball's central bore.

9. (currently amended) An intervertebral spacer device, comprising:

a first baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, a first part and a second part the inwardly facing surface having a central post extending therefrom, the post having a longitudinal axis and a ball at a head end of the post that is inwardly directed toward the second baseplate, the ball defining a spherical contour;

a second baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the second baseplate having a convex structure establishing a curvate socket communicating with a central bore through the convex structure, the curvate socket defining a spherical contour; wherein

the ball is capturable in the curvate socket, with the curvate socket's spherical contour accommodating the ball's spherical contour for rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket about a central portion of the ball;

with the convex structure's central bore accommodating the post for rotation in the convex structure's central bore about the post's longitudinal axis as the ball rotates in the curvate socket, and accommodating the post for angulation in the convex structure's central bore about the ball's central portion as the ball angulates in the curvate socket; and further comprising

a spring member housed by the second baseplate between the first part and the second part such that a compressive load applied to the outwardly facing surfaces of the baseplates is borne by the spring member.

10. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 9, wherein the second baseplate's inwardly facing surface has a curvate pocket formed by a central portion of the second baseplate's inwardly facing surface concaving outwardly to define a semispherical contour, and wherein the convex structure has an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the outwardly facing surface being secured to the second baseplate, and wherein the central bore extends from the convex structure's inwardly facing surface to the convex structure's outwardly facing surface, and wherein the central bore has an opening on the convex structure's outwardly facing surface that is surrounded by a curvate taper defining a semispherical contour, and wherein the curvate socket is established by the

curvate taper and the second baseplate's curvate pocket.

11. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 10, wherein the second part of the second baseplate travels toward the first part of the second baseplate as the spring member compresses under the compressive load.

12. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 10, wherein the spring member is ring-shaped.

13. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 10, wherein at least one of the curvate pocket and the curvate taper has a hemispherical contour.

14. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 9, wherein each of the first baseplate and the convex structure has a respective inwardly facing perimeter region, and the perimeter regions have corresponding contours that reduce surface wearing during rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket.

15. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 9, wherein the convex structure's central bore is tapered to a larger diameter toward the first baseplate, and the post is accommodated, by the convex structure's central bore being tapered, for angulation in the convex structure's central bore about the ball's central portion as the ball angulates in the curvate socket.

16. (original) The intervertebral spacer device of claim 9, wherein at least one of the baseplates has an osteoinductive vertebral body contact surface on its outwardly facing surface.

17. (currently amended) An artificial intervertebral disc, comprising:

a first baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface having a central post extending therefrom, the post having a longitudinal axis and a head end that is inwardly directed toward the second baseplate;

a second baseplate, having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface having a first part, a second part, a curvate pocket formed by a central portion of the second baseplate's inwardly facing surface concaving outwardly to define a semispherical contour;

a convex structure having an outwardly facing surface and an inwardly facing surface, the convex structure further having a central bore extending from the convex structure's inwardly facing surface to the convex structure's outwardly facing surface, the central bore being tapered to a larger diameter toward the convex structure's inwardly facing surface and having an opening on the convex structure's outwardly facing surface that is surrounded by a curvate taper defining a semispherical contour; and

a ball defining a spherical contour, the ball having a central bore; wherein

the ball is seatable in the curvate pocket; and wherein

the convex structure's outwardly facing surface is securable to the second baseplate, the securing of the convex structure to the second baseplate establishing a curvate socket formed by the second baseplate's curvate pocket and the convex structure's curvate taper, the curvate socket defining a spherical contour; and wherein

the ball is thereby capturable in the curvate socket, with the curvate socket's spherical contour accommodating the ball's

spherical contour for rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket about a central portion of the ball; and wherein

the post is disposable through the convex structure's central bore and the post's head end is securable to the ball's central bore, such that the post is accommodated for rotation in the convex structure's central bore about the post's longitudinal axis as the ball rotates in the curvate socket, and such that the post is accommodated, by the convex structure's central bore being tapered, for angulation therein about the ball's central portion, as the ball angulates in the curvate socket; and wherein

the second baseplate includes a first part having the inwardly facing surface having the curvate pocket of the second baseplate, and a second part having the outwardly facing surface; and further comprising

a spring member disposed between the first part and the second part such that a compressive load applied to the outwardly facing surfaces of the baseplates is borne by the spring member.

18. (original) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 17, wherein each of the inwardly facing surface of the first baseplate and the inwardly facing surface of the convex structure has a respective perimeter region, and the perimeter regions have corresponding contours that reduce surface wearing during rotation and angulation of the ball in the curvate socket.

19. (currently amended) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 17, wherein each of the inwardly facing surface of the first baseplate and the inwardly facing surface of the convex structure has a respective perimeter region, and the ball's curvate ~~recess's boundaries accommodate~~ recess accommodates

angulation of the ball within the curvate socket at least until the perimeter regions meet, and wherein the central bore is tapered to a larger diameter toward the first baseplate, and wherein the post is accommodated, by the central bore being tapered, for angulation in the central bore about the ball's central portion, as the ball angulates in the curvate socket, at least until the perimeter regions meet.

20. (original) The artificial intervertebral disc of claim 17, wherein at least one of the baseplates has an osteoinductive vertebral body contact surface on its outwardly facing surface.